

JENNA LAVALLEE

Groundswell



I am a painter and a performer. In my performances I pour paint out of a metal bucket, about the size of my torso, onto bed sheets on the ground. These performances are documented in videos and preserved in the dried pool of the liquid dumped on the bed sheet. My strength and movement are the medium between my body and the pour- which is the act of painting. I then hang the bed sheets with pours on them onto wire. Projected onto the several layers of sheets are a series of video documentations of my pouring. In the videos I am running into and out of the frame. I hope the viewer feels entertained by my humorous performances shown on the tall, loosely hung installation of drapery in dim lighting, as if they were enjoying a movie. The pours in the videos often spill into, and mimic, the pours on the sheets. Indivertly, the installations create a set in which I can perform.

I am influenced by Helen Frankenthaler's color field painting, and am inspired by photographs of Frankenthaler pouring in her studio. What is seemingly most significant about the photographs is that they depict Frankenthaler, but never the painting as a whole. Although she may not have wanted this, her body became the subject of the photograph, and the emphasis was taken off of her painting and put onto her body. I interpret this emphasis on her body as her disempowerment. In an attempt to revise this history, I use similar pouring techniques as Frankenthaler, but run into and out of the frame, and am often haphazardly cut out of the frame, as to not allow the viewer to view me and my body. Further, Frankenthaler and I both play the same socially constructed role of a woman, and naturally perform this role. I am also reclaiming this dominant social role and choosing to publicly perform it through the act of pouring. I attempt to perform my role as a woman by releasing liquids from a bucket by use of my body, as a woman similarly does during menstruation. The bed sheets are used to further the connection of the pour to the body.

Largely speaking I am attempting to portray the woman's social role by masking the taboo act of menstruation, as I empower myself as a woman. The pours act as a personal reclamation of the female body and conscious decision to act the role of a woman. I hope to dig deeper into the history of feminist art theory to further my exploration of the themes my work attempts to discuss. In doing so I will further discover my own identity.





Groundswell, 2016, Painted fabric and video projection, run time: 2 minutes, 23' x 8'



Groundswell, (Detail), 2016, 23 ft x 8 ft







Groundswell, (Detail), 2016



